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CC:
Subject: WAPO: Local coal could make the national difference in the election

Local coal could make the national difference in the election

Washington Post
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By Ed Rogers

As the 2012 presidential race narrows to a few states, the issues that matter also become more specific. In the last few weeks before Election Day, the idea that all politics is local will reassert itself. Nothing is more true in that regard than the emergence of coal and coal country as the battleground where President Obama could meet his political end. Fredrick Kunkle does a great job in this morning's Post of explaining the current politics of coal in one such battleground state, Virginia.

When it comes to being anti-coal, President Obama has the disadvantage of being totally guilty. Contempt for coal and coal country permeates his administration and the Democratic Party as a whole. They say they hate coal for environmental reasons, but they aren't sincere about developing clean-coal technologies because they are simply anti-growth. This gets back to Obama's core ideology, which makes him want all of us to ride a bicycle and live in a university town. Democrats aren't just against coal, they are against cheap energy.

The battleground states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Colorado and Virginia are among the top 12 coal-producing states. Voters in these states are about to hear a full-throated review of the Obama administration's attack on coal. The Obama campaign knows it has a problem and it is trying to hide. Obama's EPA administrator, Lisa Jackson, has disappeared from view after being one of this administration's most celebrated public figures in Washington for the last three years. Why? Because recent polling in key states confirms the common sense that voters have about coal. They want more of it, and they think Obama's EPA is motivated more by leftist politics than by an economic plan that starts with cheap, plentiful energy.

If you like what has happened to gasoline prices during the Obama administration, then you would love what would happen to your power bill if Obama had his way. The Republican campaigns and their allies will work to make this point clear in the next few weeks.

After years of campaigning as a friend of coal and governing like coal needs to be eliminated from America's energy arsenal, the Democrat brand is tarnished and their credibility is shot. The only question is the intensity of the voters' rage about the hypocrisy and in what numbers they will turn out. But in a close race, coal could make the difference.